



NEWS RELEASE

Office of the
United States Attorney
for the
District of Nebraska
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September 16, 2009

United States Attorney Joe Stecher and the Lincoln Police Department, Lancaster County Sheriff's Department, Nebraska State Patrol, and the Lancaster County Attorney's Office announce the following information for the attention of the media:

Event Triggering this Release: On September 16, 2009, a Lincoln woman was sentenced to 10 years in prison for conspiracy to distribute crack cocaine in Lincoln between January of 2005 and September of 2008. Information provided to law enforcement indicated that Melody Winters was involved in the distribution of crack cocaine with three other persons during that time and that Winters allowed her co-defendants to sell crack cocaine from her Lincoln apartment.

Name of Defendant: Melody Ann Winters

AKA:

Age: 48

City of residence: Lincoln

Crime(s) Charged and Potential Penalty (A CHARGE is merely an accusation and every defendant is presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty): Conspiracy to distribute and possess with the intent to distribute 50 grams or more of a mixture or substance containing a detectable amount of cocaine base, also known as crack cocaine, a Schedule II controlled substance, in violation of Title 21, United States Code, Section 846. The possible penalty is not less than 10 years nor more than life imprisonment and a fine of up to \$4,000,000. Following any prison term, there would be a term of supervised release of not less than five years. There is also a \$100 special assessment

Specific Location of Alleged Crime: Lincoln

Location of Arrest: Lincoln

Alleged Dollar Loss/Type and Quantity of Drug: Winters was held responsible for the

distribution of at least 50 grams (approximately 1 3/4 ounces) and 150 grams (approximately 5 1/3 ounces) of crack cocaine.

Others Charged in Same Scheme: John D. Sutton, John H. Sutton, and Julius Sutton. John H. Sutton pled guilty to the conspiracy charge and was sentenced to 10 years in prison in June of 2009. John D. Sutton and Julius Sutton are scheduled for trial beginning November 30, 2009.

Relevant Dates:

Date of Alleged Crime: Between on or about January 1, 2005, and on or about September 30, 2008

Federal Arrest Date: January 20, 2009

Date Complaint Issued:

Indictment Returned Date: December 17, 2008

Initial Appearance Date: January 21, 2009

Plea or Trial and Date(s): Pled guilty on June 30, 2009

Sentencing Date: September 16, 2009

Next Court Hearing Type and Date: none

Assigned Magistrate Judge: The Honorable David L. Piester

Held without Bond, or Released from Custody: Winters has been in the custody of the Nebraska Department of Corrections serving sentences on related state cases during the time this case was pending.

In Continuous Custody Since: September 29, 2008

Assigned District Court Judge: The Honorable Richard G. Kopf

Initials of Assigned AUSA/Preparer of THIS Release: SEF